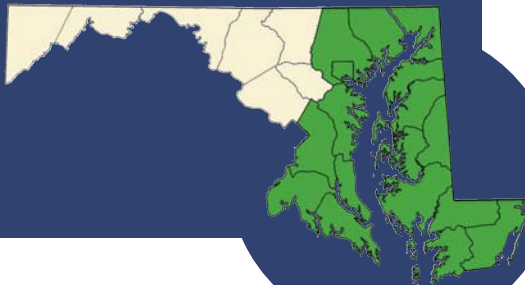


# Coastal & Watershed Resources Advisory Committee

## Maryland Coastal Program



### *The Issue...*

Discussions about the role of the public in coastal management programs often lose sight of the fact that coastal “communities” encompass a very broad and diverse set of populations, cultures and economic interests. The perspectives and expertise that are required for the success of coastal management go beyond those housed in state government. Essential to fostering an informed public and decision makers is having a regular and productive means of two-way communication to provide information, feedback, assessments and ideas about ways to meet the broad coastal management programs goals.



### *The State's Involvement...*

Created in 1977, the Coastal and Watershed Resources Advisory Committee (CWRAC) is designed to ensure stakeholder feedback and advice regarding coastal issues. The Committee is described in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 08.01.01.01), which states that CWRAC “has the duty of advising the Secretary of Natural Resources on all matters referred to the Committee by the Director of the Coastal Zone Management Program.” CWRAC advises the Coastal Program on policy issues and is the primary organization that citizens may use to voice their ideas and opinions about coastal resources management.

The Committee provides an opportunity for members to have informed discussions of coastal issues and input into state programs and policies. Committee membership includes representatives from coastal county government, citizens, business and industry, and environmental organizations. State agency and university representatives provide technical support to the Committee.

### *The Coastal Program's Role...*

The Maryland Coastal Program works with CWRAC on a variety of levels. Coastal Program employees staff the Committee. Staffing efforts include preparing and organizing meetings, facilitating discussions, and providing information to members. In addition to direct staffing of the Committee, individual Coastal Program staff work directly with the Committee on topics related to their ongoing activities. Finally, funding is provided through Section 306 for meetings, workshops and support materials.

## Highlights 1997-2004...

- The Committee is represented on the Interagency Review Group for the Coastal Zone Management Grant, the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant and the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant.
- The Committee sponsored an issue forum on climate change in Maryland. This forum was part of the Chesapeake 2000 development process and brought together technical experts and policy makers to discuss the role of climate change in managing the Chesapeake Bay. The forum was one mechanism that led to the inclusion of climate change in the wetlands section of the final Chesapeake 2000 Agreement.
- The Committee met and reviewed the draft Chesapeake 2000 Agreement. The views of all members were taken into account and included in the list of recommendations submitted to the Secretary of DNR and the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- The Committee sponsored, in association with the Dredged Material Management Plan Citizens Advisory Committee, a forum on the beneficial and innovative use of dredged material. The forum focused on both small and large-scale projects. The audience included technical experts, federal, state, and local government representatives, contractors, and environmental groups.
- The Committee is regularly updated and comments on State and federal legislation related to coastal issues. Over the past seven years the Committee has been involved with reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act and efforts to enact the Conservation and Reinvestment Act and Critical Areas Legislation.
- Committee members participate in general outreach efforts, have a presence on the Maryland Coastal Program website, and have set up information displays at a variety of venues, including the Volvo Ocean Race and Coastal Zone 2003.
- Committee meetings provide an opportunity for members to learn about and participate in federal and state coastal activities. In addition to the topics listed above, the Committee has discussed watershed planning, shore erosion, and Total Maximum Daily Loads. In preparation for the 2004 NOAA evaluation of the Maryland Coastal Program, a series of briefings were held for the Committee to ensure that members were well informed about the structure, authorities, activities, and funding allocations of the Program.
- The Committee is interested in the areas of coastal performance measures at the national and state level. Members participated in the Heinz Center discussion on performance measures held in Maryland in 2002 and continue to be engaged in discussions on developing effective and efficient measures of Program performance.



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